

Pullman woman named fastest sandwich artist

Sara Tiegs won the title with a footlong turkey sub in just 44.1 seconds

Josh Babcock/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

There are more than 44,580 Subway restaurants scattered in 113 countries throughout the world, but sandwiches at Sara Tiegs' downtown Pullman restaurant seem to fly off the prep table quicker than others.

Tiegs, 34, of Pullman, has been named the fastest sandwich artist in the world after she fixed a footlong turkey sub in 44.1 seconds, enough for first place at Subway's annual Sub Jammer competition last week in Orlando, Fla.

The competition marked Tiegs' ninth time competing.

"I wanted this title," she said. "I knew I was fast; I felt like I was the fastest."

Tiegs said she's twice claimed fourth place and often finished in the top 10, but she had never won or achieved a top-three finish until this year.

"I've been competing for so long," Tiegs said. "People would say 'Oh are you going for fourth place again?' No. I'm going to win."

Tiegs edged second place by about three seconds after a penalty increased her time to 47.1 seconds and the second-place finisher's 52-second time was decreased by two seconds for assembling a sandwich with no inaccuracies.

"I'm glad I only had one deduction, or it would have been really close and I don't know what would have happened," she said.

Tiegs said she doesn't know what the three-second penalty was for.

"Pickles or cucumbers - one of those two. I'm thinking I put too many on," she said. "They don't tell you; they don't want arguing. It's meant to be a fun competition. They just judge it and that's it."

She said penalties are based on the evenness of topping spread from end to end, number of toppings, accuracy and cleanliness of the workspace.

Tiegs faced off against 49 competitors from seven countries to take to the title. She's been to competitions with as many as 125 sandwich artists, and there were more than 200 people watching in the audience when she was announced as the winner.

"I couldn't stop smiling," she said. "It was just awesome; There's a giant trophy getting engraved with my name and they are mailing it to me. ... People are like, 'I can't believe it's here in Pullman.' "

Tiegs said because of the arson that shut down the Subway in downtown Pullman, she took the title with little practice.

"I decided a week before the competition I was going to go," she said. "It worked out pretty well; I think in years past I would overthink it and repeat the order over and over in my head and psych myself out."

Tiegs was awarded \$3,000 and a trip to the 10th anniversary of the Outside Lands music festival in the Bay Area.

The Subway she manages also will be one of the first locations in the nation to sport Subway's new remodeled look. She said the hope is that the store will reopen in October.

Tiegs has made sandwiches for the Palouse since 2001, when she started working at Subway in Moscow. In 2005 she ventured to Pullman's downtown location, which she began to manage in 2007.

She said her four years working in Moscow at a Subway with a drive-thru, where the sandwich was expected to be completed when the customer arrived at the window, helped her get up to the speed she is today. Also, her store in Pullman is one of the busiest catering stores.

She said next year the competition is in Washington, D.C., and she plans to defend her title.

"I have to try and repeat," she said.

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